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CONSIDERATIONS

TOWARD

A Peaceable Reformation

in Matters

Eccleſiaſticall.

Submitted to the judicious Reader,

By CALYBUTE DOWNING.

LONDON,

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JUNE 1, 1916

CONSIDERATIONS towards a peaceable Reformation in Matters *Eccleſiaſticall.*

1. THat the ſtraighteſt, and ſo the ſhorteſt Rule, to compoſe differences in *wayes*, is to agree of ends; for deliberations are not duly drawne up, when the deſigne is uncertaine. Hee that hath no certaine port, hath no certain winde: Therefore it were to bee wiſhed, before wee goe too farre in *Collaterall heats*, and divertive retardings in diverſity of Projects, that we well underſtood what Reformation of our Church doth import in a ſober ſenſe: For untill that be fore-laid, and allowed by an Univerſall Vote, it will be very eaſie for the averſe partie to blaſt all bleſſed beginnings, and to raiſe rubbiſh to become a Rocke, or at leaſt a *Remora* of our Reformation.

2. That the worke in hand is not planting of a Church, laying fundamentals, nor onely the reducing of practiſes to fore-laid principles, but the perfecting and improving, *cum effectu*, thoſe *Orders* and *Ordinances* that have beene either omitted or corrupted; and in the removing, what doth pregnantly produce ſuch diſ-

tempers: That so wee may secure future Relapses by reall Clauses conservative.

3. That though the rule of *Supernaturals* is not defective, nor difficult in the necessaries to the beeing or well beeing of the *Catholique Church*; yet in relation to the better being of particular Churches, there must be beating out of advantages by serious consideration of consequences; not as to single salvation, but in respect of common edification, as we are collectively considered in a visible societie: Now the fewer deductions that wee admit, the safer it is, both in relation to humane reason, and Antichristian Tyranny, which runnes up all into Authority; which is brought in, not onely as auxiliarie, but as authentique also in a concurrent way.

4. That it is very safe, and savours of a prudent and peaceable spirit, not easily to conclude many things in Governement, *Iure Divino*; For as fundamentals in point of beliefe are few, and fully revealed, and soberly to be held without any *supplementive additionals*; and the admitting of more is the cause of all the mischievous miseries in the Church in point of Doctrine: so it sets us at a distance from peace, at defiance amongst our selves, and disableth all accommodation, to pitch downe a Governement *Iure Divino*; yea, produces many hard charges, prejudicating the truth of God; and gives ground plausibly to arrest and attaint Religion, for suspition of disturbance or incroachment, by such fore-stalling the Civill State, and rendring the businesse of Reformation for the future impossible.

5. That though in a degenerate time, and Church, it be well and wisely done to discover as much as may be

be for *Information*, as neceſſary to *Reformation*; yet wee may doe as well to be wary, that we diſcard not all wee diſlike with the ſame degree of deteſtation: So that as we have cauſe not to bleſſe all that we would have, with a *Iure Divino*, ſo we may finde reaſon not to blaſt all that we deſire ſhould be removed, with an Antichriſtian brand: For we are farre from peace, while wee put ill-ſounding conſequences upon other mens opinions and practiſes, or by provoking parallels, or envious aggravations, repreſent them odious. This is very hardly to be avoyded, where affaires are carried with few heads and many hands; and when they take deſtructive worke to be their way, and that to have moſt of Juſtice which hath moſt of Primitive proceedings in it. This courſe hath coſt Chriſtendome deare, for ſeldome any Councels but fell fowle upon opinions by extreame ſentences: Now though middle Councels are ſeldome ſafe in affaires of State, yet ſeldome hurtfull in buſineſſe of the Church.

6. That though it be unpleaſing, and may prove pernitious, peremptorily to lay downe a way of governement, *Iure Divino*, to the decrying of all others in an excluſive way; yet it is very reaſonable and conformable to the principles of a Chriſtian Church, to propoſe the deſignes *Iuris Divini*, coaſting in all conſultations cloſeſt, to that which is by divine permiſſion or approbation; as what is moſt for Chriſtian peace, freeſt from ſcandall, fulleſt for edification, moſt for the glory of God: which Rules binde not onely becauſe they are *written*, but alſo becauſe they are *reaſon*. And in thus doing wee ſhall bee true to the end and

reaſon of the State, which is to be a moſt Chriſtian nationall Church.

7. That as change is no wiſe mans choice, but hard chance often puts him to yeeld to it, who would never poſitively have pitched upon it for a remedy; ſo it is reaſon in alterations to take care that ſome things which are mutable, as to their originall, be not too eaſily changed upon colour of *Inconvenience*, without ſuch a neceſſity as is as eaſily diſcovered: For as it is dangerous to venter upon the inconveniences of any great alteration, ſo it will be difficult to avoid the like grievances upon the ſame grounds, becauſe if we change now evill for good, upon mens advice, why may wee not change againe for the better; and ſo we ſhall alwayes be medling under the conſideration of mending: and while we complaine of Innovations, wee ſhall doe nothing but innovate.

8. That we ſhall doe well to diſtinguiſh upon what is to be reformed, whether the corruptions be incorporated by Cuſtome, have colour of Law, or are meere matter of Fact, which doe riſe and fall with a faction: Diſ-uſage to carry men off inſenſibly, may be ſafe in the firſt; over-ruling by interpretation in the ſecond; and exemplary diſcountenance in the third; for where ſuch men get no heat, they will take no cold. And ſo we ſhall appeare, ſuch as ſeeke more to remove what we feare then what we hate.

9. That as it is a ſlip in Judgement to confound *Perſons* and *things*, *Fact* and *Law*, in a deſtructive way, ſo it may be an errour in good deſires; and ſomething daſh our deſigne to goe direct and downe-right wayes, though

though to upright ends in point of Edification, without allowance of due time for men to ſee reaſon in what is laid downe as a Rule: For all ſudden departures are dangerous and offenſive, as prodigious; therefore it may be a conſideration worthy the weighing, and will prove a great aſſurance of peace, to lay foundations of Governement at a good latitude, that the *Reformation* may bee of a *growing conſtitution*, and ſo may beare up againſt corruption; as well underlaid by its owne good temper, and not onely ſtand or fall by the temper or diſtempers of men.

10. That if it be not well to goe on in provoking wayes, when tis poſſible to pacifie and ſweeten, then it is not wiſe to ſtirre many matters at once, becauſe many matters engage many men; yea, many times move more than is fit to bee removed, or to bee diſcovered moveable: Therefore in puniſhing perſons, Reformers ſhall doe well to be tender of *the honour of Offices*; and in diſcarding Superſtition in point of places, times, and performances, take heed of foſtering prophaneneſſe in any of thoſe reſpects, I confeſſe 'tis hardly to be avoyded, but that party which is to ſuffer Reformation, muſt needs for the time be neare to ruine: for many that hate the Clergies Canons and Orders, love not Gods Commandements nor Ordinances.

11. That though Civill States may be free from temporall turnes and intereſts in the Reformation they deſigne on the Church, yet they ſhall hardly avoid the ſuſpition of it, if the *Clergy* be not reſpectively called to *Conſultation*: Therefore it may be well, and is expected that there bee communicating not onely in a private way

way with men, whoſe mindes they know afore-hand, and it may be, have already ſuggeſted their ſence; but with ſuch alſo as are diſ-ingaged and reſolved to be reſerved untill ſuch a time, as a publique agitation may give ground to declare their judgements; this will be of no ill influence upon the whole worke in relation to the Chriſtian world.

12. That ſeeing *Politique Lawes* ſhould be laid in with *Morall poßibility*, and multiplicity of commands makes them impoſſible, as well as the difficulty of the duties; therefore it is beleeved a good courſe not to over-lay any State with poſitive penall Lawes, promiſſarie Oathes, diſcovering Subſcriptions, or multitude of Ceremonies; eſpecially a Church that hath the Law of God as a perfect rule of Doctrine, Manners, and neceſſarie Diſcipline: But let the things be few that are required, and then let them bee ſtrongly commanded. For many indifferent things have coſt too deare, having beene put on too hard upon pious and peaceable men, without any accommodation or tolleration: Thus without caſes reſerved to an arbitrarie power, conſcientious men may bee moderately dealt with, that they complaine not of a rigorous remedy as a grievance and perſecution of mankinde.

FINIS.

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